What are the three levels of government?

Activity # 1 Levels of Government

Materials needed: For each group of 3-4 students and for each individual student, a copy of ***Three***

***Levels of Government Sort Cards*** (Handout #2.1); scissors; glue

**Procedure:**

Step 1: Provide each group of 3-4 students a set of ***Three Levels of Government Sort Cards*** (Handout

#2.1). The cards contain vocabulary and phrases related to the levels of government. Have each group cut and sort the cards into three categories: national government, state government, and local government. Note: Some of the categories overlap and may vary according to your local community. For example, “Builds and Maintain Prisons” is listed as a state level function but may be categorized as “Federal” if there is a federal prison in your area. A suggested answer key follows:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **National Level** |  | **State Level** |  | **Local Level** |
| Makes laws for the nation | Makes laws for the state | | Makes laws for counties, cities  and towns | |
| Prints and coins money | Builds and maintains prisons | | Provides roads, parks, hospitals | |
| Runs the armed forces and  provides national defense | Meets in the state capitol | | Provides law enforcement, fire  protection | |
| Deals with other nations | Issues drivers licenses | | Meets at City Hall | |
| Meets in Washington D.C. | Governor |  | Mayor |  |
| President | | | | |

Step 2: Conduct a gallery walk where students walk around the room to observe how the other groups sorted their cards. Upon return to their seats, students may rearrange any of their cards. Discuss the similarities and differences of the various classification systems.

Step 3: Using a document camera or an overhead transparency, display the ***Three Levels of Government Sort Cards*** (Handout #2.1). Lead a discussion about the responsibilities of each level. As a teacher-directed activity, help students compare and contrast the similarities and differences of

the responsibilities of each level of government. Place each card on a 3-column table with one column for each level of government. Begin with the national level. Ask, “What does the national level government do that no one else does?” Continue with each separate level of government.

Step 4: To identify and describe the relationships among national, state and local governments, read your textbook for content.

Step 5: The next day, provide each student with his or her own copy of the government vocabulary phrases, ***Three Levels of Government Sort Cards*** (Handout #2.1). Have individual students cut and sort the cards into the different levels of government, glue the cards into place, and label each level.

Assessment

 Sort phrases related to government into local, state, and national levels of government.

Handout #2.1

Three Levels of Government Sort Cards

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Meets in the state capitol | Meets in Washington  D.C. |
| Meets at City Hall | President |
| Provides roads, parks, water, hospitals | Runs the armed forces and provides national defense |
| Issues drivers licenses | Provides law enforcement, fire protection |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Governor | Mayor |
| Builds and maintains prisons | Makes laws for the nation |
| Makes laws for the state | Makes laws for counties, cities and towns |
| Prints and coins money | Deals with other nations |